Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): Apparatus for protecting electric circuitry and/or an electric consumer against damage from excessive electric energy comprising a voltage limiting element which has connecting parts which are coupled to current paths of the consumer via soldering surfaces and a spring which subjects the soldering surfaces to mechanical prestress so that, in the event of a loss of the soldering connection, the element is lifted off the soldering surface and separated from the current paths, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein for each of two current paths one conductor ~~(2, 2' and 3, 3' respectively)~~ is provided on a circuit plate ~~(1)~~ which is interrupted by pairs of soldering surfaces ~~(6, 6' and 7, 7' respectively)~~, wherein one of the soldering surfaces is coupled to a current source and the other is connected to the consumer, wherein ~~and in that~~ connecting parts ~~(9, 10)~~ of the element ~~(8)~~ are soldered together at the pair of soldering surfaces ~~(6, 6' and 7, 7' respectively)~~, and wherein a leaf spring which has at least one shoulder extends through a slot in a circuit plate and pushes against the element.

Claim 2 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim 1~~, characterized in that~~ wherein the conductors ~~(2, 2' and 3, 3' respectively)~~ have solder surfaces ~~(4, 4'; 5, 5')~~ for connection to the current paths and the soldering surfaces ~~(6, 6'; 7, 7')~~ for the element ~~(8)~~ are next to each other beneath the connecting parts ~~(9, 10)~~ of the element ~~(8)~~.

Claim 3 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim 1~~, characterized by~~ including a soldering material for soldering the element ~~(8)~~ which has a defined melting point that is a function of a predetermined, permissible heating temperature.

Claim 4 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim ~~1, characterized by~~ 10 wherein a leaf spring ~~(11)~~ which has at least one shoulder ~~(12) that~~ extends through a slot ~~(13)~~ in the circuit plate ~~(1)~~ and pushes against the element ~~(8)~~.

Claim 5 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim ~~1, characterized in that~~ 10 wherein one end of the leaf spring ~~(11)~~ lies in an edge cutout ~~(14)~~ and lateral sides on the circuit plate ~~(1)~~ and ~~in that~~ wherein the other end has a locking hook ~~(16)~~ which extends through an opening ~~(17)~~ in the circuit plate ~~(1)~~.

Claim 6 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim 1~~, characterized in that~~ wherein the element ~~(8)~~ comprises a suppressor diode which sets a predetermined voltage value.

Claim 7 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim 1~~, characterized in that~~ wherein the consumer comprises a storage battery.

Claim 8 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim 7 ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the protective element and the storage battery are arranged in a housing.

Claim 9 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim 7~~, characterized in that~~ wherein the storage battery comprises at least one Li-Ion-cell.

Claim 10 (new): Apparatus for protecting electric circuitry and/or an electric consumer against damage from excessive electric energy comprising a voltage limiting element which has connecting parts which are coupled to current paths of the consumer via soldering surfaces and a spring which subjects the soldering surfaces to mechanical prestress so that, in the event of a loss of the soldering connection, the element is lifted off the soldering surface and separated from the current paths, wherein for each of two current paths one conductor is provided on a circuit plate which is interrupted by pairs of soldering surfaces, wherein one of the soldering surfaces is coupled to a current source and the other is connected to the consumer, wherein the connecting parts of the element are soldered together at the pair of soldering surfaces, and wherein one end of a leaf spring lies in an edge cutout of a circuit plate, lateral sides of the spring lie on the circuit plate, and another end of the spring has a locking hook which extends through an opening in the circuit plate.

Claim 11 (new): Apparatus for protecting electric circuitry and/or an electric consumer against damage from excessive electric energy comprising a voltage limiting element

which has connecting parts which are coupled to current paths of the battery via soldering surfaces and a spring which subjects the soldering surfaces to mechanical prestress so that, in the event of a loss of the soldering connection, the element is lifted off the soldering surface and separated from the current paths, wherein for each of two current paths one conductor is provided on a circuit plate which is interrupted by pairs of soldering surfaces, wherein one of the soldering surfaces is coupled to a current source and the other is connected to the battery, wherein connecting parts of the element are soldered together at the pair of soldering surfaces, and wherein the electric consumer comprises a storage battery.

Claim 12 (new): A device for protecting an electronic circuit and an electric power supply from unduly high electric energy, the device comprising a circuit board, spaced-apart first and second sets of spaced-apart first and second soldering surfaces, first and second strip conductors on the circuit board defining first and second, separate current paths for connection to the electronic circuit and the power supply, respectively, the first and second strip conductors being electrically coupled to the first and second soldering surfaces, respectively, of each set, a protective component having connectors, solder attaching the connectors of the component to the first and second sets of soldering surfaces, and a prestressed spring connected with the circuit board and engaging the component so that upon a softening or melting of the solder the spring moves the component away from and out of contact with at least some of the soldering surfaces.

Claim 13 (new): A device according to claim 12 wherein the soldering surfaces for the component are disposed side by side beneath the connectors of the component.

Claim 14 (new): A device according to claim 12 wherein the solder has a melting point defined in dependence on a fixed, permissible heating temperature for the solder.

Claim 15 (new): A device according to claim 12 wherein the component comprises a voltage limiting component.